

# **ALKALI TIMBER SALE**

June 19, 2006 Land Board

## **Location of Sale:**

- Stillwater Unit (NWLO) – Approximately 2.5 air miles south of Eureka, Montana.
- Lincoln County – Section 36, T36N-R27W

## **Sale Volume & Estimated Value:**

- The estimated volume is 8,960 tons (1,220 MBF) with an estimated minimum value of \$174,365.00.
- In addition to the estimated stumpage value, a fee of \$2.65/ton for Forest Improvement will be charged for all merchantable sawlog timber harvested.
- 100% Common Schools Trust
- 7.35 tons/MBF is the conversion factor.

## **Sale & Harvest Treatments:**

- The sale contains 15 units totaling 204 acres.
- Silvicultural prescriptions are seed tree and commercial thin. Seed tree cuts would promote the natural regeneration of approximately 152 acres with western larch, Ponderosa pine, and Douglas-fir. Fifty-two acres of heavily over-stocked, stagnant, intermediate-aged Douglas-fir stands would be commercially thinned.
- The seed tree harvest units are dispersed through this section of land and are small, ranging from two to 25 acres in size.
- Current stocking levels are very high from both the forest management and wildfire risk perspectives. This is an urban interface area and wildfire fuels reduction is an integral part of the proposed harvest prescription.
- No old growth would be harvested.

## **Harvest Systems:**

- 100% tractor

## **Road Construction:**

- Approximately 0.3 miles of new road construction is required to access the harvest units and 6.2 miles of maintenance and minor reconstruction is required to upgrade existing roads to meet current BMPs. Approximately 3.1 miles of existing road would be abandoned. All abandoned roads would be covered with slash and debris to reduce illegal road use, erosion, and the spread of noxious weeds.

## **Public Involvement & Issues:**

- Public involvement was solicited through legal notices in the Tobacco Valley News (Eureka weekly). Letters were also sent to adjacent landowners and special interest groups. The public, DNRC specialists, and specialists from other agencies helped identify the issues that were analyzed in the Old Highway EA (April 2006). The Alkali Lake section is one of four sections addressed in the EA. The areas of concern specific to the Alkali Lake Section were wildlife, fuel

reduction, spread of noxious weeds, and the forest road transportation system including acquisition of easements from the Federal Road Cost-share Program.

**Public Comments, Issues, and Mitigations:**

- **Fuels Reduction** – This area is within the Wildland Urban Interface approximately 2.5 miles from Eureka. This project would reduce dense fuels on more than 200 acres; some areas planned for harvest currently average more than 10,000 trees per acre. Firefighting efforts would benefit from the upgraded transportation system and the proposed harvest prescriptions.
- **Noxious Weeds** – Off-road equipment used for felling, skidding, log processing, and loading activities would be washed and inspected before being brought on site. Roads that are being abandoned would be sprayed with herbicides. All disturbed areas would be grass seeded. The project area would be monitored and, if needed, scheduled for herbicide treatment.
- **Transportation Systems** – To complete the project transportation system, 0.3 miles of new road construction would be built, 5.2 miles of existing road would receive BMP upgrades and 3.0 miles of road would be abandoned. Cautionary signs identifying logging activities and traffic would be posted at appropriate public road junctions. Necessary temporary road use agreements have been acquired from the US Forest Service.
- **Wildlife (loss of cover)** – The project area does involve lands within identified and delineated big game winter ranges; the winter range in this project is part of a 170,000 acre block of winter range and this proposal would harvest approximately 204 acres. Deer, elk, and moose are expected to continue to use this area. Currently, elk security elements are lacking due to the proximity of the State parcel to open roads not under DNRC control. Hunter access would be slightly reduced by implementing the action alternative. Retention of shrubs and trees along open roads, road closures, broken topography, and pockets of untreated areas would maintain limited sight distances within the project area.

**The Director recommends the Land Board direct the Department to sell the Alkali Timber Sale.**

# Alkali Unit Map



## LEGEND

### Roads

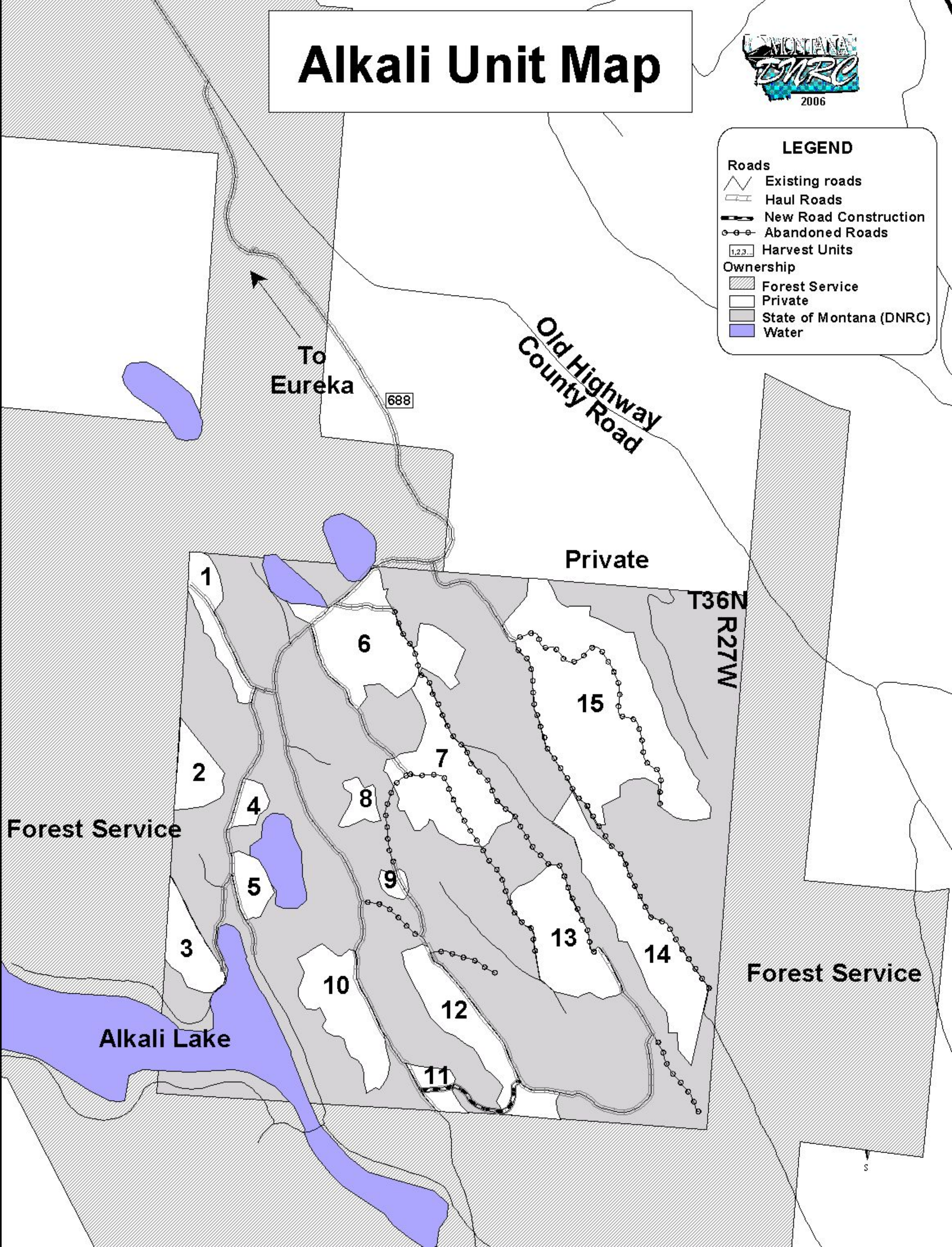
- Existing roads
- Haul Roads
- New Road Construction
- Abandoned Roads

### Harvest Units

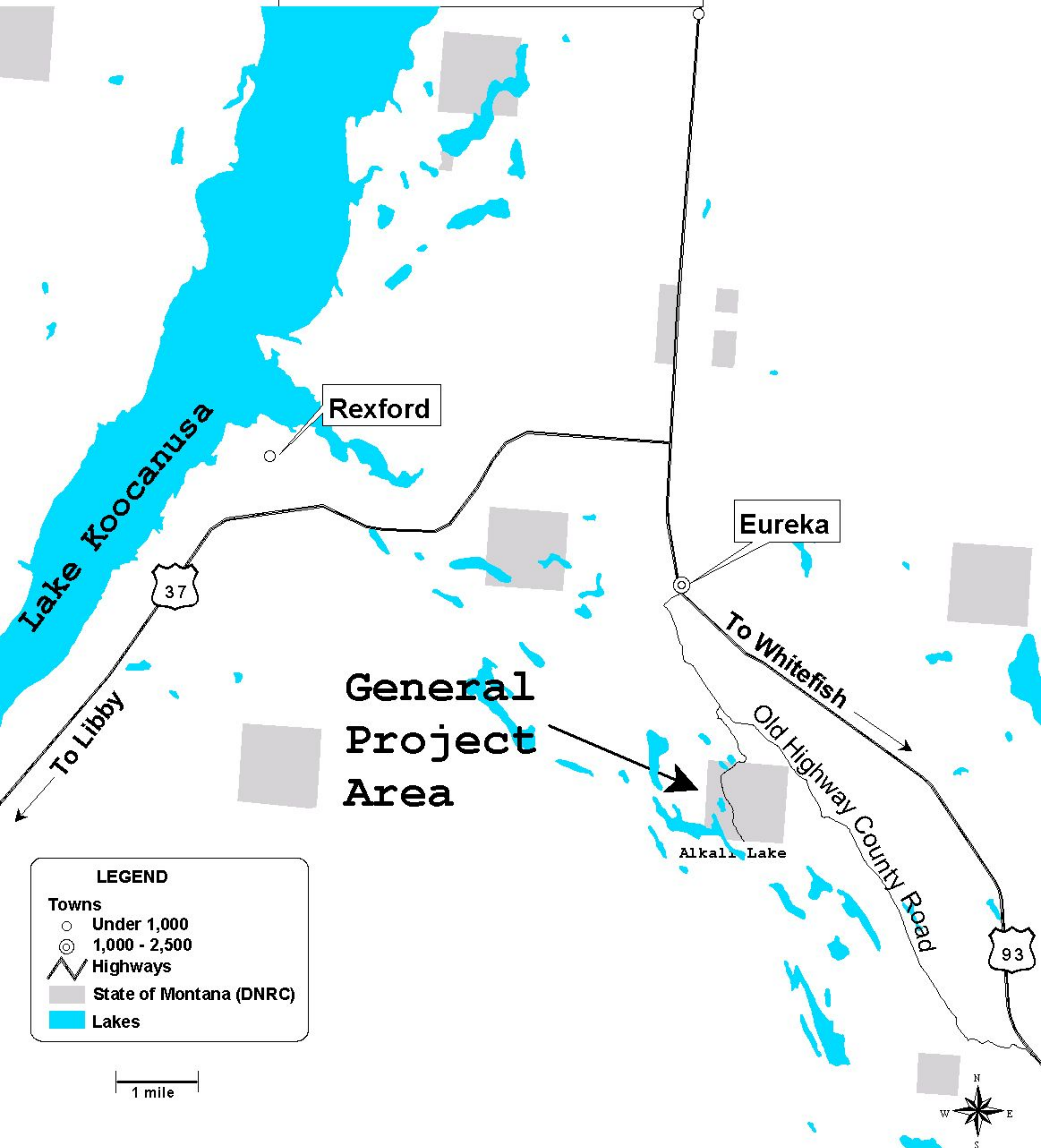
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### Ownership

- Forest Service
- Private
- State of Montana (DNRC)
- Water



# Vicinity Map for Alkali Timber Sale



Rexford

Eureka

General  
Project  
Area

Alkali Lake

## LEGEND

### Towns

- Under 1,000
- ⊙ 1,000 - 2,500

### Highways

State of Montana (DNRC)

Lakes

1 mile

